

REMARKS

Claims 14-16, 19, 21 and 22 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 14 and 21 are amended, and claim 18 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 14-16, 18, 19, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mori (U.S. Patent No. 6,384,927) in view of Cooper (U.S. Patent No. 6,052,442). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Neither Mori nor Cooper, individually or in combination, discloses or suggests priority determining means for determining whether or not each one of the at least one set of electronic mail data has a high priority based on a corresponding electronic mail title ... notifying means for notifying a user when the image forming means forms an image based on the electronic mail data which has been determined to have high priority, as recited in independent claim 14, and similarly recited in independent claim 21.

The Office Action asserts that Mori, at Figs. 9, 19 and 24, and at col. 19, lines 43 – col. 20, line 6 disclose priority determining means for determining whether or not each one of the at least one set of electronic mail data has a high priority based on a corresponding electronic mail title. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Mori discloses at Figs. 19 and 24 and at col. 19, lines 43 – col. 20, line 6, that the subject field allows a receiving facsimile machine to determine whether or not the electronic mail is to be transferred to another facsimile machine or the facsimile machine is the destination facsimile machine. For example, if the subject is a value other than a predetermined value 000, this indicates to the receiving facsimile machine that it is not the destination facsimile machine, and the electronic mail should be transferred. Conversely, if the subject field is 000, this indicates to the facsimile machine that it is the recipient of the image

information. Therefore, the facsimile machine outputs the received image. However, this is not priority information. Accordingly, Mori does not disclose the above-noted feature of claims 14 and 21.

Further, Mori does not disclose or suggest notifying a user when the image forming means is forms an image based on the electronic mail data which has been determined to have a high priority. The Office Action asserts that Mori at steps 406, 907 and 1207 of Figs. 9, 19 and 24, and col. 14, lines 44-50, col. 21, lines 1-6, and col. 23, lines 19-24 disclose this feature. Nowhere in Figs. 9, 19 and 24 does Mori disclose that a user is notified when the image forming means forms an image based on electronic mail data which has been determined to have high priority. Further, a careful reading of the passages, col. 14, lines 44-50, col. 21, lines 1-6, and col. 23, lines 19-24, do not reveal that a user is notified when the image forming means forms an image based on the electronic mail data which has been determined to have high priority.

Cooper does not compensate for the above noted deficiencies of Mori. Cooper's printer 36 prints message data that is selected by user from a list displayed on a display 16 (see col. 7, lines 15-36). As such, Cooper does not disclose or even suggest the above noted features of the claims.

Thus, independent claims 14 and 21 define patentable subject matter. Claims 15, 16, 19 and 22 depend from the respective independent claims, and therefore also define patentable subject matter. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 14-16, 19, 21 and 22 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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